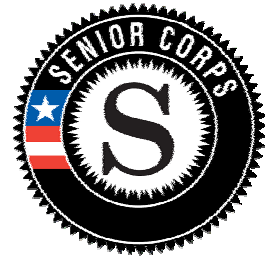


Senior Corps Update January 2003 Edition



An update of activities and information published by the Senior Corps for the Senior Corps network and interested National Service colleagues.

The Senior Corps is part of the Corporation for National & Community Service and its network of programs which also includes AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America

Senior Corps
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Initiatives— (Page 9)

EPA Announces Initiative to Protect Older Persons — EPA is developing a new Aging Initiative that will result in a national agenda designed to examine and prioritize environmental health hazards that threaten the lives of older persons. This initiative will examine the impact that a rapidly growing aging population will have on ecosystems as well as encourage older persons to volunteer in their own communities to help reduce hazards and protect the environment for future generations. A series of meetings have been planned around this initiative with the first being a workshop sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences held in Washington, DC, December 5 and 6. Additionally, public meetings will be held next spring in California, Florida, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington, DC. EPA plans to draw of the expertise of professionals and researchers at the federal, state, and local levels in the fields of environment and health. EPA will also work with public and service provider organizations dealing with the aging population.

Why is EPA focusing efforts on older Americans?

The mission of the EPA includes the protection of human health and natural resources. EPA Administrator Whitman has made the protection of the health of older persons a priority for the following reasons:

- The United States is undergoing a demographic transformation. By 2030, the number of elderly is expected to double to 70 million. The 85 and older population represents the fastest growing age group, which is expected to number 14 million by 2030.
- Our bodies become more susceptible to environmental hazards as we age. The immune system diminishes with increasing age in most people. In addition, the immune system response is often reduced because older persons are often on multiple medications and/or have a chronic condition that can make them more susceptible to environmental toxins.
- As we age, we have accumulated a lifetime of exposures that persist in our bodies.

What are some of the environmental hazards that can affect the health of older Americans?

- **Drinking water** – micro organisms (*e-coli* and *cryptosporidium*)
- **Indoor air**-- pollutants including radon, second-hand smoke, and carbon monoxide
- **Outdoor air** – pollutants such as ozone and particulate matter
- **Pesticides**, volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- **Temperature extremes**
- **Neurotoxins** – Lead and mercury

How can we create a National Agenda on the Environment and Aging?

In the spring of 2003, public meetings will be held throughout the country based on the findings on December 5th and 6th National Academy of Sciences workshop, “The Differential Susceptibility of Older Persons to Environmental Hazards.” The EPA will solicit input from all of the stakeholders, including older Americans, to ensure the development of a comprehensive National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging.